

Brave Old World

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Brave Old World

Overview

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In 1989, the klezmer revival in America was in search of new directions when four of its leading figures came together to form a new band and create a new Yiddish music for the concert stage. Their vision combined the artistry of classical music and the freedom of jazz with the vibrant power of the East European Jewish tradition. The result was a powerful new musical style full of improvisation and musical communication, in which daring innovation grows from the deepest roots of tradition.

Brave Old World brings together four pioneering virtuosi of the Klezmer scene. Vocalist and violinist Michael Alpert, renowned for his native Yiddish and soulful lyricism, is “the only klezmer artist writing Yiddish songs on contemporary topics” (New York Newsday). Musical Director Alan Bern, acknowledged as the leading master of klezmer accordion and piano, brings a unique and innovative musical vision to the group’s arrangements. Kurt Bjorling inspires audiences with the passion and imagination of the Jewish clarinet, while the incomparable Stuart Brotman embodies multi-instrumental virtuosity on bass, percussion and cimbalom.

Brave Old World has brought klezmer music into the global-village present with original and provocative new Yiddish songs on subjects as contemporary as Chernobyl and the fall of the Berlin Wall, in international workshops and residencies, and through pioneering collaborations with East European artists like Hungary’s renowned Muzsikás. Brave Old World creates its music anew onstage at every concert, and plays it with a passion that reaches out and embraces audiences.

Since its founding, Brave Old World, whose members live in New York, Berkeley, Chicago and Berlin, has achieved international recognition with concerts spanning Europe, North America and Israel (First Prize, 1992 International Klezmer Festival, Safed) and award-winning recordings on the Red House, Rounder, Flying Fish, Wergo, Ellipsis and Pinorrek labels (1994 German Record Critic Prize).

To attend a Brave Old World concert is not only to hear great original klezmer music, but quite simply to experience live music at its best.

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Biographies

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Biographies

MICHAEL ALPERT

Vocals, fiddle, guitar, percussion

Michael Alpert is a pioneering figure of the klezmer revival and is internationally known for his performances and recording of klezmer music with Brave Old World, Kapelye, and other groups. Raised in a Yiddish-speaking family, he is considered one of the finest traditional Yiddish singers today, and is recognized for his original Yiddish songs.

A research associate at New York's YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Mr. Alpert has conducted extensive research of traditional Jewish music and dance throughout the U.S. and Eastern Europe. He was musical director of the PBS Great Performances special *Itzhak Perlman: In the Fiddler's House*, executive producer of the Angel/EMI CD of the same title, and appeared with Mr. Perlman on CBS' *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Program director of New York's 1982 Festival of Soviet Jewish Traditions, he produced the musical portion of the exhibition *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union* at New York's Jewish Museum.

Mr. Alpert is co-director of Buffalo on the Roof, a Yiddish folklore camp, and has taught traditional singing and dance at KlezKamp (YIVO's Yiddish Folk Arts Program) and the Balkan Music and Dance Workshops (East European Folklife Center) for many years. He is featured in the klezmer documentary *A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden*, the BBC-TV series *Rhythms of the World*, and sings on the Grammy-nominated soundtrack CD from the film *Partisans of Vilna*.

ALAN BERN

Accordion, piano and musical director

Alan Bern is the leading klezmer accordionist and pianist today, a virtuoso classical and jazz pianist, a composer and arranger of theater music and director of musical productions for the stage.

Currently living in Berlin, he was musical director of the Bremen State Theater from 1994-96, where his work included directing the music for *The Threepenny Opera* and composing the score for the German adaptation of *Angels In America*, by Tony Kushner. Mr. Bern also directed the music for Joshua Sobol's acclaimed *Ghetto* in close collaboration with the playwright on prominent German stages. For over fifteen years he has specialized in the performance and arrangement of Yiddish and other East European musics, touring North America, Europe and Japan with Brave Old World, Andy Statman, The Klezmer Conservatory Band, Kapelye, the Sandglass Theater and other groups. In 1993 and 1994 he served as musical consultant to the Berlin Jewish Community.

Well-known as an innovator on the world music scene, Mr. Bern has received composition and performance grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Council for the Arts and other funders. He holds an MA in philosophy from Tufts University, has taught ethnomusicology, music theory, and philosophy at the New England Conservatory of Music and Tufts University, and is a frequent member of the teaching staff of KlezKamp and Buffalo on the Roof.

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KURT BJORLING Clarinet, bass clarinet

Kurt Bjorling is one of the finest clarinetists to emerge from the current klezmer renaissance. Known for his soulful and elegant interpretations of traditional klezmer music as well as for the jazz-flavored innovativeness he brings to the style, Mr. Bjorling has been clarinetist and musical director of the Chicago Klezmer ensemble since 1984, and toured Europe in 1988-89 as a guest artist with The Klezmatics.

In 1991 he appeared at Lincoln Center as guest soloist with the Concordia Chamber Symphony to perform his original work "A Suite of Yiddish Music," commissioned for the occasion.

Mr. Bjorling studied clarinet with Lloyd Scott and Larry Combs. He teaches at numerous workshops and music programs in America and Europe, including the midwest Klezmer and Yiddish Music Institute, "KlezKanada," KlezKamp and Buffalo on the Roof. He is active in the jazz, chamber music and ethnic music fields, and arranges and performs music for theater and video.

STUART BROTMAN Bass, tsimbl (cimbalom), tilinka, percussion

Stuart Brotman has long been admired as a versatile soloist and skillful accompanist in traditional and pop music circles. He has toured and recorded with Canned Heat, Kaleidoscope, Geoff and Maria Muldaur, and Ry Cooder, appeared in the Los Angeles production of Ghetto, and performs frequently in ethnic specialty roles for TV and film.

A founding member of Los Angeles' Ellis Island Band, he toured with the Yiddisher Caravan, a federally-funded Yiddish folklife show. Mr. Brotman is staff arranger for the acclaimed Aman International Music and Dance Company, and produced The Klezmorim's Grammy-nominated album *Metropolis*.

An accomplished performer, arranger and recording artist in the ethnic field for over 35 years, Mr. Brotman holds a B.A. in music from the University of California at Los Angeles, and has taught at KlezKamp, Buffalo on the Roof and the Balkan Music and Dance Workshops.

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Appearing with Brave Old World as guest artists in some programs...

MATT DARRIAU

Flutes, saxes, clarinets, whistles, kaval, gaida

A guest artist with Brave Old World since 2002, and clarinetist during their highly acclaimed European tour of “Dus Gezang fin Getto Lodz,” Matt Darriau is an accomplished multi-reed and flute player, equally at home in Irish music as he is in Balkan, jazz, and Klezmer styles. Matt was recently named one of the most influential musicians of the last fifteen years by Jazziz Magazine for the impact he has had in bringing Balkan and world rhythms to jazz. He is also an active composer/musician in a number of other genre-hopping bands, including The Klezomatics, Les Misérables Brass Band, Orange Then Blue, as well as his own bands The Paradox Trio and Ballin’ The Jack. He also led the Celtic-fusion group Smash The Windows, has performed in Riverdance on Broadway, and has worked with such varied artists Charlie Haden, David Byrne, Oliver Lake, Séamus Egan, and Itzhak Perlman, among many others.

CHRISTIAN DAWID

Clarinet

Christian Dawid is one of the leading klezmer clarinetists in the world today, highly esteemed for his expressivity and stylistic authenticity. In 1993, Dawid founded Klezgoyim, and was the group’s musical director until 1997. He is co-founder of the 1996 series of klezmer concerts in Bremen, Bremer Klezmer Nights. In 1999, Dawid joined Brave Old World as a special guest on tour, and in 2002 he toured again with Brave Old World and the Symrna Trio. Dawid composed and performed Yiddish theater music for the Yale Repertory Theater in 2000. He has been a guest artist with Frank London’s Klezmer Brass Allstars, and in 2000 he joined the internationally-acclaimed ensemble Budowitz as clarinetist. Dawid also plays with Paul Brody’s Yiddish-Turkish Honga Longa and the Balkan group Yerevan, and arranges and composes traditional Yiddish music. He teaches at Klesfest (London, England) and is a welcome guest at the Cracow International Yiddish Festival. Dawid lives in Berlin.

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Discography

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ENSEMBLE

Bless the Fire, Pinnorekk PRCD3405039

Blood Oranges, Pinnorekk PRCD3405027, 1997/Red House RHR CD 134, 1999

Beyond The Pale, Pinorrekk CD/Rounder CD 3135, 1993

Klezmer Music, FMS/Flying Fish FMS CD 2030, 1991

WITH OTHERS

Itzhak Perlman *et al*, *Live In The Fiddler's House*, Angel CDC 7234 5 56209 5 7, 1996

Klezmer Music: A Marriage of Heaven & Earth, Ellipsis Arts 4090, 1996

Itzhak Perlman *et al*, *In The Fiddler's House*, Angel CDC 7243 5 55555 2 6, 1995

Global Gumbo, Rhino Records R2 72208, 1995

Tanz-& Folkfest Rudolstadt 94, RUCD 94-1, 1994

Jüdische Lebenswelten, Wergo SM 1604-2 281604-2, 1993

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Reviews

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Reviews

Every Brave Old World album seems like the best. They have all been so different that I am sometimes reluctant to insist that any one is “best”... This album is the best yet. It is a tour de force. It is new Jewish culture in the best, most wonderful sense of the world... Once you have the CD in your hands to listen to, I guarantee that you will agree that life is better. Order your copies today.

the Klezmer Shack, Ari Davidow, 4/10/04

“Brave Old World can’t be beat for delicacy, humor, and innovation in the form.”
New York Village Voice

“The revival’s first supergroup. Every player is a virtuoso.” **The Washington Post**

“Their sheer ability to swing, along with their palpable reverence for and joy in klezmer’s sources, sets them apart. Their collection of original and traditional songs...is delivered with such virtuosity that I just had to laugh.” **LA Weekly**

“Brave Old World is most celebrated for manifesting the faithful musical passion of an indomitable spirit. They’ve established a virtual consensus internationally among critics, scholars and audiences in recognition of their status as the best in klezmer.” **In Pittsburgh Weekly**

“Brave Old World mesmerized a large audience...Each member is a soulful artist and a consummate musician...Brave Old World had the audience clapping and whooping unabashedly throughout much of their performance, and the crowd was vocally hungry for more even after a lengthy encore.”

Durham (North Carolina) Spectator

“These are incredibly flexible and fiery musicians, technically proficient and emotion-driven all at once, And so much fun to watch and listen to! There’s brilliant artistry at work when Brave Old World performs. What these gentlemen do deserves not only the whoops and hollers but thanks, this for keeping alive and enlarging upon klezmer, a delicious music, an entertainment, a picture of life.”

Bloomington, Indiana Herald-Times

“I could easily fill this space with praise for the virtuosity and passion, the infectious rhythm, the inspired fusion of old and new musical styles that distinguish Brave Old World...most importantly, where most other klezmer bands rarely get beyond chutzpah and sentimentality, this U.S.-based quartet offers an underlying urgent compassion.” **Toronto Globe & Mail**

“Brave Old World is the premier klezmer band in America. Their performances are artistically demanding and at the same time highly entertaining.”

APAP Presentors Reports

“Brave Old World romps and stomps with high spirit, plays ballads with high emotion and captures an audience from its first notes.” **San Francisco Examiner**

“While the Yiddish world may be gone, its songs remain. And (they) will never be silenced as long as there are groups like Brave Old World to play and sing them.”

Madison (Wisconsin) Monthly Reporter

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Brave Old World

Reviews

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“These men have been every-klezmer-where. They’ve played every tune and sung every song; they’re tired of everything that’s usual and obvious. They’re moving on. If you are bored by the basics, this is for you.” **Sing Out!**

“Everything about this production is just right—from its design to its informative liner notes. And although it is profound, Beyond The Pale is never coldly intellectual, instead it bubbles over with humor and playfulness. I dare to predict that in the future all klezmer musicians will have to measure themselves against this milestone of contemporary Jewish music.” **Berlin “Tip” Magazine**

“Here in Germany we’d almost forgotten how multi-layered and soulful music can be, and what a treasure Jewish culture can offer us...music that goes beyond all geographic, cultural and emotional boundaries.” **Stuttgarter Nachrichten**

“Brave Old World is a wonder of diversity. Their instrumental pieces, often consisting of several parts, sound flowing and light, the vocals and recitations are powerful and convincing, and they don’t shy away from drama and pathos.” **Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant**

“In a concert lasting 2-1/2 hours, Brave Old World amply demonstrated that they, along with the Klezmatics, are the leading band of the klezmer revival in the 80s and 90s. This applies not only to the technical perfection of each of the four musicians, but to their entire way of playing together. The concert began quietly and with great suspense. Later the band playfully alternated between suspenseful, serious and quite passages and uptempo dance music.... The musicians’ joy was shared by the audience, which acknowledged their performance with a long standing ovation.

FolkWorld Live Review, Vamos!, Kulturhalle, Luneburg, Germany

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Appearances

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Select Appearances

NORTH AMERICA

Alaska Folk Festival, Juneau, Alaska
Alden Theatre, McLean, Virginia
Allegheny County Cultural Programs, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
American Friends of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, New York, New York
Ashkenaz: A Festival of New Yiddish Culture, Toronto, Ontario
Berkeley-Richmond Jewish Music Festival, Berkeley, California
Brigham Young University, Salt Lake City, Utah
Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn, New York
California Plaza Presents, Los Angeles, California
Calliope: The Pittsburgh Folk Music Society, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec
Celebrate Brooklyn Festival, Brooklyn, New York
Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, State College, Pennsylvania
Chamizal National Memorial Theater, El Paso, Texas
Chicago YIVO Society, Chicago, Illinois
Cityfolk, Dayton, Ohio
Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio
College Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, Ohio
Congregation Beth Shalom, Anchorage, Alaska
Cumberland County College, Vineland, New Jersey
Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
Emelin Theatre for the Performing Arts, Mamaroneck, New York
Ethnic Folk Arts Center, New York, New York
Federation-CJA, Hampstead, Quebec
Folklife Center of International House, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Fox Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia
Golden Land Connections, New York, New York
Gordon Center for Performing Arts, Owings Mills, Maryland
Grand Performances, Los Angeles, California
Hillel Society, Easton, Pennsylvania
Huntington Arts Council, Huntington, New York
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
Jackie Gleason Theater, Miami Beach, Florida
Jewish Community Center of Greater Vancouver, Vancouver, British Columbia
KlezKanada, Montreal, Quebec
Klezmermania, Oakland, California
Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, West Palm Beach, Florida
Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center, Newton, Massachusetts
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, New York
Livent, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Long Island University, Greenvale, New York
Lotus Education and Arts Foundation, Bloomington, Indiana
Mann Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Highland Park, New Jersey
Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Portland, Oregon
Montreal International Jazz Festival, Montreal, Quebec
Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York
Musica Beth Tikva, Toronto, Ontario
National Council for the Traditional Arts, Silver Spring, Maryland
National Folk Festival, Dayton, Ohio
National Geographic Society, Washington, DC
New England Conservatory, Boston, Massachusetts
New Haven Symphony, New Haven, Connecticut

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Philadelphia Folk Festival, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Philharmonic Center for the Arts, Naple, Florida
Plymouth State College, Plymouth, New Hampshire
Potter County Fine Arts Council, Coudersport, Pennsylvania
Quad City Arts, Rockford, Illinois
Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing, New York
Queensborough Community College, Bayside, New York
Radio City Music Hall, New York, New York
Ravinia Center of the Performing Arts, Chicago, Illinois
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
Saratoga Center for the Performing Arts, Saratoga, New York
Seattle International Children's Festival, Seattle, Washington
Short North Performing Arts Association, Columbus, Ohio
Sinai Temple and First Methodist Church, Marion, Indiana
Spectrum, Montreal, Quebec
Saint Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota
Sunset Theater, Carmel, California
Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Tampa, Florida
Tanglewood, Lenox, Massachusetts
Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
The Ark, Ann Arbor, Michigan
The Ash Grove, Santa Monica, California
The Birchmere, Falls Church, Virginia
The Georgian Bay Folk Society, Owen Sound, Ontario
The Knitting Factory, New York, New York
The Wildflower Music Festival, Hawley, Pennsylvania
Third International Conference of Yiddish Clubs and Friends of Yiddish,
Delray Beach, Florida
Three Rivers Arts Festival, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Tulsa Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
UCLA Center for the Performing Arts, Hollywood, California
University of California, Santa Cruz, California
University of California, Santa Barbara, California
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
University of Minnesota, Morris, Minnesota
University of North Carolina, Asheville, North Carolina
Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
Winnipeg Folk Festival, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC
World Financial Center Arts and Events Program, New York, New York
World Music Institute, New York, New York
Yasgurs Farm Production, Cohecton, New York
Yiddishkayt Festival, Los Angeles, California

EUROPE

Alte Opera, Frankfurt, Germany
Festival of Jewish Culture, Krakow, Poland
Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany
International Jiddisj Festival, Amsterdam, Holland
International Klezmer Festival, Safed, Israel
Jewish Culture Days/Weeks Festival, Berlin/Frankfurt/Munich, Germany
Jewish Museum, Frankfurt, Germany
Muziekcentrum Bredenburg, Utrecht, Holland

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Brave Old World

Awards

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Television and radio features in America, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Poland and Israel, 1989–97

World Emmy Award for *In the Fiddler's House*, 1996

Montreux Film Festival, Golden Rose for *In the Fiddler's House* (Best Music Film and Best Film of the Festival), 1996

German Record Critic Prize for Brave Old World's CD *Beyond the Pale*, 1994

Represented West German Radio at the EBU Festival in Rudolstadt, Germany, 1994

Grant from ArtsLink to collaborate with Muzsikas in Budapest, Hungary, 1994

First Prize, International Klezmer Festival, Safed, Israel, 1992

US Library of Congress names Brave Old World's CD *Klezmer Music* to recommended list, 1992

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Brave Old World

Workshops

Workshops

In addition to concerts, Brave Old World offers the following special programs, workshops and lecture/discussions. They can be presented singly or combined as individually tailored educational experiences lasting one day, a weekend, a week, or even longer. They are ideal for schools, universities and a wide-variety of community groups.

DANCING TO THE CEILING

Traditional East European Jewish Dance

Experienced dance instructor and researcher Michael Alpert teaches the Jewish wedding dances traditionally done to klezmer music: the freylekhs, sher, bulgar, and others. These line, circle and partner dances are the lifeblood of Yiddish celebrations. Musical accompaniment is provided by the other three members of Brave Old World, with the involvement of local musicians when appropriate. This is also an excellent opportunity for more accomplished participants in the instrumental workshops to experience playing in a Jewish dance band.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS IN THESE SONGS

Jewish Life in Yiddish Folk and Popular Song

Drawing on their close family ties to the Yiddish song tradition as well as decades of work with immigrant-generation singers, the members of Brave Old World focus this hands-on singing workshop on the rich traditions of Yiddish folk and popular song. Topics include Daily Life, Unrequited Love, Politics and Ideology and many other facets of Jewish history and culture in the Old World and the New. Fusing the convivial atmosphere of a sing-along with expert instruction in vocal styling, song interpretation, and Yiddish pronunciation, this workshop can be geared to an interested general public or to experienced singers.

MAKING KLEZMER MUSIC

Jewish Instrumental Traditions

The members of Brave Old World provide hands-on instruction in the performance and interpretation of klezmer music. Masterclass sections focusing on specific instruments (winds, bowed strings, etc.) are combined with work in ensembles and discussions exploring the history, theory and interpretation of the klezmer repertoire. Special topics include tradition vs. innovation and playing for dances and celebrations. This workshop can be geared to beginners, advanced players, or in between.

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Brave Old World

Lectures

Lectures

FIFTY YEARS SINCE I LEFT HOME

A historical introduction to klezmer and Yiddish music

Where does klezmer music come from, geographically, historically and culturally? The musicians of Brave Old World discuss these questions with the help of historical recordings and live musical examples. Connections with other East European musical traditions are stressed, as are the changes within the klezmer tradition as a result of immigration and acculturation.

A KLEZMER GUIDE TO THE AUTOBAHN

The presentation and reception of klezmer music in Europe

An eye-opening and surprising glimpse at the growing popularity of klezmer music throughout Europe. Topics include: the importance of Europe to American klezmer groups; Germany's central role as a prime venue and market for contemporary klezmer music and the political, historical and cultural factors contributing to this phenomenon; klezmer music and the image of Jews in contemporary Germany; reaching out to post-1989 East Europe (eg, the differences between performing Yiddish music in Poland and Germany); the European scene: German, Dutch, Polish, and other European performers of klezmer music.

FUNNY, YOU DON'T LOOK KLEZMER

A history of the klezmer renaissance

How did the klezmer revival of the 1970s–90s emerge and why? What are the trends within the revival, recent developments and innovations? This workshop discusses these questions, in the process examining Jewish identity in North America (and elsewhere) as well as broader questions of ethnicity and cultural affirmation. It makes use of films/videos, recordings and articles to examine how the klezmer revival has been portrayed in public media. The workshop concludes with a discussion of new directions in Yiddish music: bring older traditions into the '90s and beyond, taking our place on the world music scene and where it's all going.

Song of the Lodz Ghetto

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Song of the Lodz Ghetto 1 of 6

A BRIEF EXPLANATION

Dus Gezang fin Getto Lodz, 1940-Present

About 85 minutes, plus encores from regular repertoire

Alan Bern, musical director, accordion, piano

Michael Alpert, vocals, violin, guitar, percussion

Stuart Brotman, bass, cymbalom, trombone, percussion, violin

Kurt Bjorling/Christian Dawid/Matt Darriau, clarinet, bass clarinet, saxophone

The Nazis created a ghetto in the Polish city of Lodz in 1940. Jews from all over Europe were transported and forced to live there under extremely crowded and inhumane conditions. Many tens of thousands of them died of hunger and disease in the ghetto, many more tens of thousands were transported from there to death camps, where they were killed.

Street singers and, in the early ghetto years, cabaret performers wrote songs reacting to their condition. Among the most famous was street singer Yankele Herszkowicz, who was often accompanied by a violinist when he performed. Herszkowicz's most famous song is "Rumkowski Chaim," named after the Nazi-appointed head of the ghetto's Jewish administration, Chaim Rumkowski.

In the late 1980s, Gila Flam interviewed survivors of the Lodz Ghetto and recorded them singing the songs they remembered on tape. In 1990, she gave Brave Old World this tape, and asked them if they would like to develop a musical program based on the songs it contained. Their first performance of the material was almost musicological, very sparse settings and explanations before and after each song. But they soon realized that an important emotional level was missing, and they began to take a freer, more artistic and less scholarly approach to the music. At this point, they hit on the idea of making the program a kind of dreamlike dialogue between themselves, Brave Old World, and the Lodz songs. Like a film which is about making a film, their Lodz program became about coming to terms with the Lodz songs from their own point of view.

To make that clear, Brave Old World bounces back and forth between their own songs and Lodz songs, and even to pre-war Polish music, as well as instrumental interludes which make bridges between the songs and create atmospheres they want. They use semi-theatrical means to go from song to song without any interruption, like cross-fades between songs and sudden interruptions (like a jumpcut in film). Some of the songs are presented in theatrical poses, like standing on a soap box, or standing in a marching band formation. And lighting is used theatrically to help the audience understand that different songs are occurring in different times and places, all in their imagination, of course.

There are somber moments in the program, but also exuberant moments as well. Some of the music sounds jazzy, but much of it sounds familiarly "klezmer." The Yiddish content of the program is very high, and is greatly appreciated by Yiddish speakers and non-Yiddish speakers alike. Brave Old World can distribute the translated song lyrics for the audience to follow along, like an opera libretto, and can project them as supertitles using PowerPoint.

Because the program works on a purely musical and emotional level as well as intellectually, it leaves audiences with a feeling of reconciliation and wholeness, not darkness and despair. After all, there were survivors of the Ghetto, and thanks to them Brave Old World can bring the songs of resistance back to life again.

For more background information, read Gila Flam's *Singing for Survival*, published by University of Illinois Press.

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Song of the Lodz Ghetto 2 of 6

PROGRAM NOTES

Song of the Lodz Ghetto is a unique musical program featuring Brave Old World's arrangements of the rare Jewish music created between 1940–44 in the Nazi ghetto of Lodz, Poland. The songs at the heart of this program were collected in Israel among survivors of the Lodz Ghetto by Dr. Gila Flam of Hebrew University. Most of the songs heard in this program have not been publicly performed since the time of the Holocaust and are not available on commercial recording.

While the more widely known songs of the Vilna, Warsaw, Krakow and Bialystok Ghettos flowed primarily from the pens of celebrated poets and composers, these Yiddish songs from Lodz are largely the creation of proletarian street-singers and folk bards. They render a vivid picture, by turns chilling, defiantly satirical, and uplifting, of everyday life — and death — during one of humankind's darkest hours, reaffirming the power of song to engender and manifest spiritual resistance in the face of overwhelming circumstances. In bringing these songs to life again, Brave Old World commemorates the history of the Lodz Ghetto, pays homage to the indestructible spirit of its inhabitants, and lifts its voice in the struggle for a better world.

Brave Old World's setting of this musical legacy fuses traditional and contemporary musical sensibilities, bridging the concert stage and folk creativity. The group's new Yiddish songs and compositions are interwoven with the songs from Lodz and traditional Jewish tunes from Central Poland, creating a musical journey that traverses the distance between pre-war Europe, the Holocaust, and our own time. Thus Brave Old World explores not only the music of the Lodz Ghetto, but also their relationship to it as contemporary American and Jewish composers and performers. Juxtaposing past and present, they make their role as contemporary interpreters of the Lodz material an explicit and integral part of the performance.

Most of the songs rendered here are the work of Yankele Herszkowicz, principal bard of the Lodz Ghetto. Herszkowicz performed in the streets, standing on a wooden box, at times accompanied by a violinist from Vienna until the Nazis confiscated all musical instruments in the ghetto in 1942. Crowds would gather around Herszkowicz, joining in the familiar refrains and clapping along to his most popular creations, in particular the song "Rumkowski Chaim," named for Chaim Rumkowski, head of the Lodz Judenrat. In this spirit, Brave Old World asks the audience to join with them on the chorus to this and similar songs.

A masterpiece of thinly-disguised social criticism and double entendre, Rumkowski Chaim has the veneer of a paean of praise to Rumkowski — sufficient to have kept the Gestapo and Jewish Police from squelching it — but was in fact a bitter cry of resentment and outrage. It is the song most universally recalled by survivors of the Ghetto. Some of Herszkowicz's songs were uniquely his own compositions, while others — like many of the songs composed by Ghetto singers — were newly adapted versions of existing Yiddish, Polish and international popular songs from the pre-war period. Yankele Herszkowicz survived the war, remained in Poland and died in the 1960s. His songs live on in the memory of survivors throughout the world.

Also featured in Brave Old World's program is the song "Winter 1942" by Miriam Harel, a 14-year old girl at the time. A tragic parody of the satirical Yiddish folk song "Yikhes" ("Family Background"), it describes the death and deportation of her immediate family. Harel also survived the war and lives today in Israel. A warm, optimistic woman, she once told Brave Old World, "*Zingtt mayne lider gezunterheyt, un zay tsufridn mit zey.*" ("Sing my songs in good health, and benefit from them.")

Song of the Lodz Ghetto is a constantly evolving and changing program, reflecting changes in our time and sensibilities. An early version was premiered in 1990 at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt, Germany. It was featured in 1992 as part of the

Brave Old World

Song of the
Lodz Ghetto
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A Review

Leine News, Germany

March 20, 2002

Songs for Survival: *World-class quartet Brave Old World fascinates with klezmer music* by Klaus Opperman (English translation)

Whoever thinks of klezmer as an instrumental music in which the clarinet always plays the lead role, sometimes boisterously and sometimes wistfully, has missed out on Brave Old World. On Monday evening in Schloss Landestrost, this world-class quartet played a program that would do honor to the world's greatest performing venues. In the process, they generated boundless enthusiasm and left behind profound, lasting impressions on their audience.

The four leading American musicians of this genre, who formed Brave Old World in 1989 while searching for new directions in klezmer music, aren't satisfied with alternating between chutspa and sentimentality. At the point where other klezmer bands are content to earn their kudos, Michael Alpert (vocals, violin, guitar, percussion), Alan Bern (piano, accordion), Stuart Brotman (bass, trombone, cymbalom, violin) and Matt Darriau (clarinet, saxophone) have just barely begun. They combine traditional and contemporary material with wit and sensitivity, both in the music and in the lyrics. Consequently, "Dus Gezang fin Geto Lodz" ("Song of the Lodz Ghetto") is not just a reminder from the Lodz Ghetto of a uniquely abysmal chapter in human history, it's equally a reflection on the past up to the present day. Against forgetting — songs for survival.

Alpert, who is credited with the highest level of authenticity in Jewish folksong, takes on the songs that Gila Flam at Hebrew University collected from survivors of the Lodz Ghetto, and completes them with his own Yiddish songs to make a conscious connection to the present. "Dus Gezang fin Geto Lodz" doesn't conclude with the end of the Nazi regime. Indeed.

Opening night excitement wafted through the performance in Schloss Landestrost, the fourth concert of a long tour that began in the USA and continues today in Liechtenstein. The recorded voice of Yaakov Rotenburg, survivor of the Lodz ghetto, goes directly under the listener's skin at the beginning and end of the concert. In between, a bubbling-over joy of life, accusation, yearning, reconciliation. The success and provocativeness of this program is due equally to a subtle mixing of old and new musical elements, collected songs and newly composed texts, and the quartet's remarkably high level of musicianship. Each musician has an authoritative voice which seeks and finds its completion in the ensemble. That's the clue to Brave Old World's convincing power, as well as above all the group's obvious joy in playing together, which has not diminished in spite of so many acclaimed successes.

On Monday evening Brave Old World encountered a highly concentrated and attentive audience that was enthralled and carried away by the 80-minute marathon (without breaks, but also without weak spots). Only after many encores did the audience allow the ensemble to leave the stage.

The regional cultural committee, supported by the Liberal Jewish Community Center of Hannover, made an inspired choice in presenting Brave Old World. Anyone who missed the concert and hopes for the CD will have to wait a year for the recording and marketing to be complete, according to tour manager Florian Fürst from Berlin. Until then, fans can comfort themselves with previous recordings (*Beyond the Pale, In the Fiddler's House, Blood Oranges*).

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Brave Old World

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A Review
Fürth Press, Germany
Highest Finesse plus Charisma

A bit of caution is always called for when a program preview calls something “world class.” After about two hours with Brave Old World, though, that description deserves to be strongly underlined, then this concert of music from the Lodz Ghetto grabbed its audience and won’t let go for a long time. The American quartet provoked storms of applause — and blew away their audience in the sold-out City Hall. The final concert of the 2002 Klezmer festival turned out to be its highpoint as well, and the encore portion lasted half again as long as the concert itself. Highest musical finesse and powerful charisma: in this concert everything that adds up to “world class” came together.

A Review
Neu-Isenburger-Press, Germany
March 22, 2002
Impressive Songs of the Holocaust Era
by Nina Olf (English translation)

One could read their passion for Yiddish klezmer in the faces of musicians of the quartet Brave Old World. At the Sprendling Bürgerhaus they successfully combined Yiddish song with elements of jazz and classical music. The audience was won over by the artists’ mastery and sheer stamina.

In its program “Dus Gezang fin Getto Lodz,” the four artists bring Yiddish street and folksongs back to life. The repertoire included a rich variety of both their own compositions and songs that were composed between 1939 and 1945 in the Nazi Ghetto of Lodz. The ensemble used critical songs to recall the Holocaust Era. Brave Old World’s concert brought back to life the indestructible spirit of the Ghetto inhabitants and connected it to developments in contemporary music.

The quartet unified inherited songs with Yiddish and American music of today. Brave Old World greeted the audience in a pitch-black auditorium, and Alan Bern introduced the evening’s music with soft piano sounds. From the first minute on, the audience was captured by the quartet’s music. All eyes were on singer Michael Alpert, who impressed the audience with a multi-faceted voice. In addition to his remarkable singing, his violin playing drove the tempo of the program forwards. Short glances between clarinetist Matt Darriau and bassist Stuart Brotman were all they needed to play together with no friction. The traditional celebratory music prevented even a single listener from sitting motionless on his chair. The audience’s heads and feet kept time with the beat. With a smile on his lips, Michael Alpert sang and danced to Polish folk music. For just short of two hours, the group gave the audience no chance to applaud. The flowing transitions from song to song were staged perfectly.

For that, at the end of the evening, the audience applauded even more enthusiastically. Followed by appreciative whistles and deafening clapping, the quartet left the stage, but the applause refused to die down. Only after two encores was the audience prepared to let the ensemble go.

Photo Caption: *At the Sprendling Bürgerhaus, the New York quartet Brave Old World combined music passed down from the Nazi Ghetto of Lodz with contemporary compositions*

Brave Old World

Song of the Lodz Ghetto 5 of 6

A REVIEW

Fatherland, Liechtenstein

March 22, 2002

Songs between Hope and Despair: *The TaK presents music from the Lodz Ghetto* (English translation)

On Wednesday evening one of the leading ensembles of klezmer music could be heard in the Theater on Kirchplatz: Brave Old World performed its new program in Schaan.

Duz Gezung fin Getto Lodz is the name the Americans gave to their unusual concert program. Hardly known Yiddish songs, composed between 1940 and 1945 in the Lodz Ghetto, woven together with Brave Old World's own original compositions. The result was a fabric of sound made of pain, sadness and anger, but also laughter and hope, which carried the audience in its wake for 90 minutes.

Tradition and Innovation

The ensemble around pianist and accordionist Alan Bern has been working together since 1989. Each of the four musicians has a rich artistic sensibility at his disposal, one which reaches far beyond Yiddish (klezmer) music. Many a klezmer band gets trapped in folkloristic clichés. In contrast, Brave Old World searches for the very roots of inspiration. The message is more important to these four klezmerim than a historical accurate but superficial rendition of a musical text. That's likely the secret of their success: a music which is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition of Eastern Europe, reanimated with the point of view of contemporary daily life. That approach is already in the best Yiddish tradition. Wherever the children of Abraham found themselves in the diaspora, they incorporated elements of the host culture into their own language and music.

In TaK (Theater on Kirchplatz), one heard musicians who were at home with with all the facets of music. The drama and tension of contemporary chamber music were an organic part of the program, as well as the energy and spontaneity of jazz, or even, especially in the encores, the driving power of a rock riff. Thanks to deeply grounded knowledge, virtuosic ability and a good portion of innovation, Brave Old World has long stood at the forefront of the klezmer revival.

Street Scenes

The current program drew a vivid portrait of daily life — and death — during one of the darkest hours of human history. Simple songs of the Yiddish street singers in the Lodz Ghetto made up the stations of an imaginary journey. The recorded voice of a survivor in the darkness at the beginning and end of the program created a gripping framework. This song about "Rumkowski Chaim," the unbeloved "Kaiser of the Ghetto" came from Yankele Herszkowicz, as did many of the Ghetto songs. Singer and violinist Michael Alpert is one of the few klezmer musicians today writing songs on contemporary subjects, for example, on the Chernobyl nuclear accident. His song "Berlin 1990" reflects on the events in Germany shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This song reappears in several variations through the program, particularly enchanting is the refrain: "Sing, my fiddle, and play a sweet song of the diaspora."

Michael Alpert's warmly colored voice revealed the deep pain of human existence, when he abruptly switched from high passages full brimming over with the joy of life to fragile and tender whimpers and sighs. Multi-instrumentalist Stuart Brotman — whether driving the rhythm forward on electric bass or dreamily tapping the cymbalom — and the clarinetist and saxophonist Matt Darriau, contributed to the drumming, stamping, shrieking and shouting in the room. The sound man even succeeded in overcoming the room's notoriously difficult acoustic. The audience made its enthusiasm so clear to the musicians of Brave Old World, that the concert was extended by four pieces, in which the clarinetist, Matt Darriau, could finally play freely. His somewhat restrained playing during some parts of the evening is understandable. He had substituted on short notice for his colleague Kurt Bjorling, who didn't want to miss his own wedding.

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Brave Old World

Song of the Lodz Ghetto

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A REVIEW

Liechtensteiner Volksblatt

March 22, 2002

Songs of Life and Death: The Group Brave Old World with Klezmer Music in Theater on Kirchplatz by Gerolf Hauser (English translation)

Brave Old World from the USA is Alan Bern (piano, accordion), Michael Alpert (vocals, violin), Stuart Brotman (bass, trombone) and Matt Darriau (clarinets, saxophone), surely one of the most important and best groups of the klezmer revival in the world, has earned a host of international prizes and recognition with its “klezmer music between tradition and innovation.”

Yiddish Music

Klezmer is the music of East European Jews, which developed over many hundred years and contains many elements of other East European folk musics. Originally klezmerim were traveling musicians who played at weddings and festive occasions outside of the synagogue. Its texts are in Yiddish, which developed from Middle-High German. In the 15th century, driven by pogroms in German areas of settlement, the Jews began to immigrate to Poland. As a result, the Yiddish language contains Slavic and Latin elements alongside those of Hebrew and Middle-High German. In Theater on Kirchplatz Brave Old World gave a guest performance of *Dus Gezang fin Getto Lodz*, which includes their own compositions as well as arrangements of the little known Jewish music that was composed in the Nazi Ghetto of Lodz (Poland), from where Jews were deported to the extermination camps of Chelmno/Kulmhof (80,000 murdered) and Auschwitz (60,000 murdered).

Moving Tenderness

The songs, largely creations of street singers and folksingers, were collected by Hebrew University's Gila Flam from survivors of the Lodz Ghetto living today in Israel. They paint a picture of daily life and death during one of the darkest hours of human history. The majority of the songs come from Yankele Herszkowicz, the most famous folksinger of the Lodz Ghetto. With the revival of these songs, Brave Old World does honor to the indestructible spirit of the inhabitants of the Lodz Ghetto, and raises its voice in the struggle for a better world. Brave Old World demonstrated with technical finesse and moving tenderness that each of the songs is a declaration of love for the language which survived both concentration camps and ghettos. Over the course of almost two hours, Brave Old World seamlessly wove together over 20 songs without interruption or applause, creating a continuous dramatic arch out of music that comes from and returns to the heart and casts light on the tragic side of life. Only at the end of the program did the musicians “release” their audience with completely refreshing drive and infectious rhythms. Brave Old World shows that klezmer music, although always clearly recognizable, has the power to undergo change and incorporate elements of jazz and new, original Yiddish songs. Composed by the internationally recognized singer, violinist and carrier of the Yiddish vocal tradition, Michael Alpert, these songs take on contemporary themes such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Chernobyl nuclear accident, reflecting past and present in each other.

Caption: From Dimitry Shostakovich comes the quote, “*The music of every folk is beautiful, but about Jewish folk music I must say, it is unique!*” On Wednesday evening in Theater on Kirchplatz, Brave Old Music offered music that was both beautiful and unique.

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BRAVE OLD WORLD

TECHNICAL RIDER (pg. 1 of 2)

- Presenter shall provide at its sole expense all musical instruments and equipment as specified in the following Technical Rider, for use in rehearsal and performance relating to the engagement, as well as a rehearsal space available to BOW on the day of the engagement at a time convenient to BOW.
- Presenter shall provide at its sole expense for the engagement:
 - A) a fully-professional sound system with professional sound technician(s), and
 - B) special lighting and/or spotlights with professional lighting technician(s).

Such sound and lighting systems shall meet or exceed the specifications indicated in the lighting plot provided by BOW, and the sound system shall include sufficient cables, stands, amplification, equalization, electronics and speakers to fully fill the hall and stage with undistorted sound at comfortable levels. Full sound check and lighting check should commence no less than three (3) hours prior to the performance. **Front of house and monitor system must be equalized to the acoustic of the room before the band arrives and sound check begins.**

Detailed Specifications:

- If available, presenter shall provide a reflective shell, such as used in chamber music and choral concerts, large enough to encompass the entire band set-up.
- If “Song of the Ghetto Lodz” is being performed, presenter shall provide one standard stage cube or similar prop, strong enough to support the weight of a standing adult, and a professional-quality tenor slide trombone, with mouthpiece and stand.
- Microphones (boom stands for all mics, plus one extra-long boom stand if “Song of the Ghetto Lodz” is being performed):
 - 1 (one) professional quality vocal (**No SM 58, please!**)
 - 6 high quality condenser instrumental mics
 - 4 DI boxes and 6 XLR line-ins
 - 1 (one) wireless headset vocal mic (**only if dance teaching involved**)
- Band provides 5 lavalier mics (1 for violin, 1 for clarinet, 1 for bass, 2 for accordion).
- One excellent, professional-quality PA cabinet (for use as on-stage bass speaker), preferably Klipsch, square cabinet, **not a wedge!**
- Mixing board: At least 16 free channels, capable of providing phantom power, plus separate EQ and at least 3 monitor sends per channel, digital reverb.
- Power amplifier and main speakers: Sufficient to fill entire hall with clean sound at comfortable levels.
- Monitors: 4 (at least 3 separate mixes).
- Presenter shall provide at its sole expense a professional-quality concert grand piano (*e.g.*, Steinway B or D, Yamaha C6, or equivalent quality and size) in excellent condition, on stage, **tuned the day of the engagement to A=441**, for use in rehearsal and performance relating to the engagement.

PLEASE NOTE: If the piano is not tuned to specifications, BOW cannot play.

BRAVE OLD WORLD Technical Rider (pg. 2 of 2)

- Presenter shall provide at its sole expense a professional-quality classical guitar (nylonstrings; no brand-new strings, please!) in excellent condition, with a built-in pick-up.
- Lighting: Adequate professional stage lighting and standard assortment of colored gels.(Please see Lighting Plot.)
- Chairs: 4 orchestra chairs (padded, no arm rests) on stage.

OTHER SPECIFICATIONS: PLEASE NOTICE!

- Sound check should commence no less than three hours prior to opening of house.
- Parking space for at least one vehicle in close proximity to and with direct access to stage door, for a period beginning five hours prior to performance to two hours after.
- Auditorium should be available at least one hour before sound check for cymbalom tuning.
- Temperature of auditorium should not be changed after tuning and sound/lighting check. Artists ask that there be no smoking in performance space and backstage area for at least four hours prior to performance.
- Presenter shall provide BOW with green room facilities for the engagement, including an adequate number (minimum 6) of comfortable chairs, adequate facilities for changing clothes, an ironing board and an iron, mineral water and juices, and catering consisting of raw fruits and vegetables and **a variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes** such as **(vegetarian)**: hummus, falafel, pasta, vegetarian sushi, Chinese noodles, etc., and **(non-vegetarian)**: chicken, turkey, fish dishes, etc. (NO PORK, PLEASE!)
- Presenter shall provide BOW with a hot meal on the day of the engagement (please offerat least one vegetarian and one non-vegetarian choice) at a time convenient to BOW, or Presenter shall reimburse BOW for same.
- Presenter shall provide BOW with secure storage facilities at which musical instruments and equipment may be left and stored during BOW's stay in the city of the engagement. Pre-senter agrees to be liable for any loss resulting from damage to or theft of any musical instrument and/or equipment left and stored in such secure storage facility.
- **HOTEL:** Presenter shall provide for BOW at its own expense 4 single, non-smoking rooms in abusiness-class hotel, with 24-hour telephone and fax service, and the ability to send andreceive email from the rooms (fax/data port). The hotel shall provide free parking and a securestorage area for the group's musical instruments and excess luggage.
- **MERCHANDISING:**Presenter shall provide a centrally located table/booth for CD and related sales.

BOW has the exclusive right to merchandise all non-food items.

**No smoking on stage and backstage
for at least four hours before sound check!**

If problems fulfilling any part of this rider occur, the presenter shall contact Ixtlan Artists Group, Inc. immediately to make it possible to find solutions together.

....., 20.....

.....
presenter signature

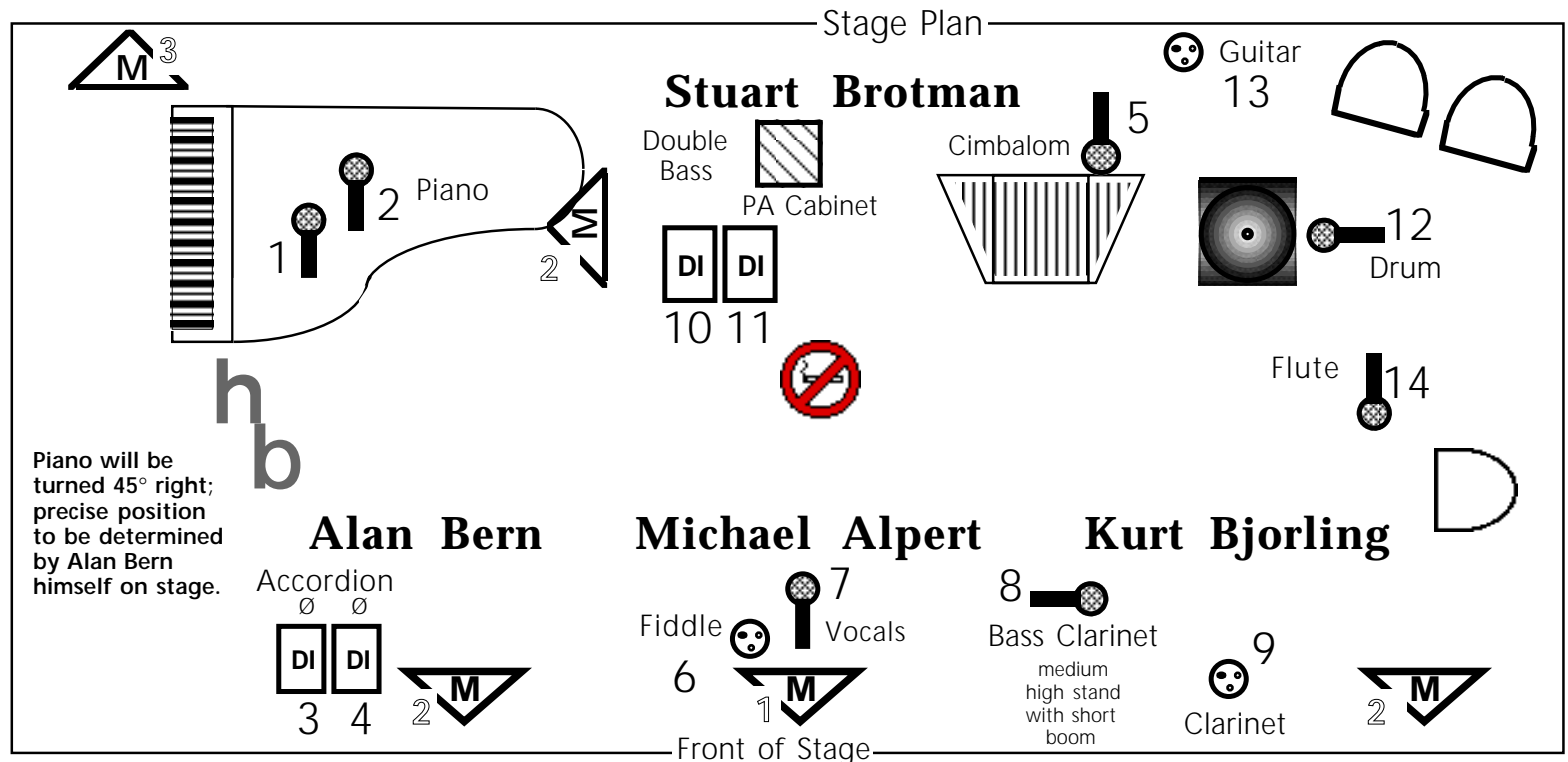
BRAVE OLD WORLD

Please contact us well in advance in case of questions or if these requests cannot be fulfilled.

Channels:

- 1 Piano Lo
- 2 Piano Hi
- 3 Accordion melody
- 4 Accordion bass
- 5 Cimbalom
- 6 Fiddle
- 7 Vocals
- 8 Bass Clarinet
- 9 Clarinet
- 10 Doublebass
- 11 Cello-Bass
- 12 Drum
- 13 Guitar
- 14 Flute
- 15 Reverb Return L
- 16 Reverb Return R

On bigger desks, the channels can be placed in this order in the middle of the desk, the returns somewhere on the right side.



Technical Requirements:

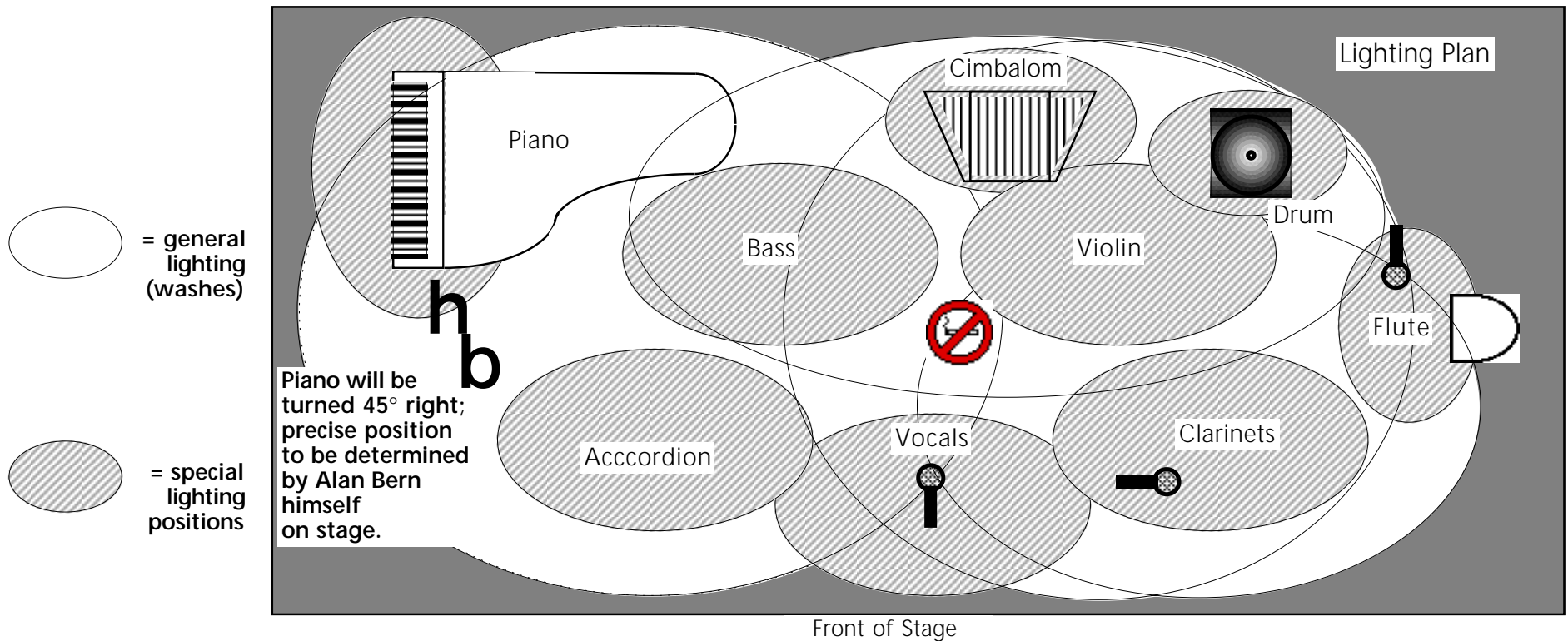
PA: big enough for the venue and professional sound quality, high quality components, equalized for room and stage before the sound check begins
• desk: 16 channels, (e.g., Soundcraft), 3 AUX-pre-, 2 Aux-post • **Effects:** high quality digital-reverb (SPX 990, PCM 70) • **On stage:** 6 microphones on boom stands, 5 XLR-female connectors, 4 DI-Boxes, high-quality material, **no SM58 for vocals** • **Monitors:** 4 monitors, at least 3 separate mixes (see stage diagram: 1, 2, 3), 1 square or rectangular PA cabinet (Klipsch or equivalent, not a wedge) • **Also:** 4 orchestra chairs, padded, with no arm rests.

The piano must be tuned to A=441 Hz on the day of concert. This is indispensable. A tuning to 443 Hz or higher makes it impossible for the clarinet to play in tune with the piano. Piano tuning must be finished no later than one hour before the beginning of the sound check.

No smoking on stage and backstage for at least four hours before sound check!

BRAVE OLD WORLD

Please contact us well in advance in case of questions or if these requests cannot be fulfilled.



Technical Requirements:

Professional stage lighting with standard colors, mostly warm (amber) with some blue as well, subdued to medium bright levels.

Lighting for cimbalom and piano must to be checked with the artists to ensure that the keys/strings can be seen.

No cross lighting, no light in the back corners and unused sides of stage. Artists should not be blinded by the lights.

No smoking on stage and backstage for at least four hours before sound check!