

"Klezmer Music: The First One Thousand Years." by Henry Sapoznik

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Second Avenue Square Dance

IU Libraries provides a recording of "[Second Avenue Square Dance](#)". The piece was recorded in 1950 in New York City and performed by the Abe Ellstein Orchestra with Dave Tarras.

There's more than a little irony in the title "square dance" - with its invocation of rustic and roughhewn rural dancing - as it does not prepare the listener for this performance: the magnetic and elegant sound of Yiddish music master Dave Tarras at the height of his powers. Tarras is paired with longtime bandleader Abe Ellstein who composed/arranged for and accompanied every major Yiddish performer of the era. Here, he has created a piece in Tarras' style with a lush and arresting arrangement highlighting the clarinetist's unique stylistic approach and tonal color while clearly demonstrating Ellstein's savvy with big band and popular sounds and harmonizations. The "Square Dance" might have been a gag. The music was not.



Figure 1: Dave Tarras, klezmer clarinetist and bandleader.

Berdichever Khusidl/Mazel Tov Mekhutonim

IU Libraries provides access to '[Berdichever Khusid](#)' and '[Mazel Tov Mekhutonim](#)'. The pieces were recorded in 1995 in New York City and performed by the band Kapelye featuring Henry Sapoznik.

Among the many genres of dance tunes found in the klezmer repertoire played over the years are those tunes associated with the Hassidim. These tunes, introspective to start with, then slowly accelerating to a wild and feverish tempo, reflect the tradition of 'trance dance' so emblematic of the charismatic Hasidic community. These particular tunes, 'Berdichever Khusid' (the Khusid from the town of Berdichev) and 'Mazel Tov Mekhutonim' (Congratulations to the parents of the bride and groom) were learned from classic recordings made by the orchestras of Israel J. Hochman and Abe Schwartz, respectively, both in the early 1920s in New York. As these are condensed versions of what one might hear at a Hasidic celebration, they only hint at the power and enthusiasm found in dances which characteristically would last over an hour or more.



Figure 2: KlezKamp: The Yiddish Folk Arts Program 1985 shooting a scene from the documentary film "A Jumpin' Night in the Garden of Eden" (1987). Left to right: Hankus Netsky, sax, Joel Rubin, clarinet, Henry Sapoznik, banjo, Marc Smason, trombone. Photo courtes