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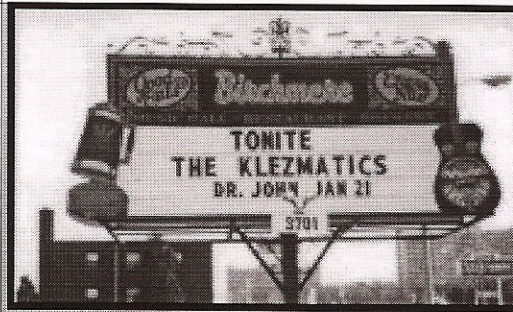
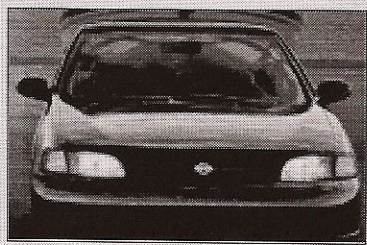
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The Klezmatics

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INTERVIEW

more the music?

Lorin: I think that you can't really separate them. You have to understand a lot more than just the notes. You have to understand how the music relates to other things, I mean, in the case of klezmer music, which in a basic defini-

tion, is Eastern-European/Jewish wedding music or party music, it really helps to understand the context in which the music was used, in the context of which it was created. And also, you can't really get inside the music by playing it in a vacuum. You have to have spent some time playing for people dancing to understand how the music works. It does help you to understand the music and how to play it by understanding the cultural background of the form—just like any other music.

Jesse: And then, moving to New York, that would have helped you hone your vision musically speaking. But I'm curious to know exactly how The Klezmatics met.

Lorin: Well, some of the members met through an ad that was placed in the *Village Voice*, looking for people to play klezmer music. The couple of people who survived after that short amount of time, through various coincidences ended up meeting the other people who eventually became part of the band.

Jesse: And would you say that the group has maybe more of an American influence than some of the other groups? I mean, I understand that you play some electric instruments, also.

Lorin: Electric bass and electric violin and keyboards, in addition to drum kit, accordion, clarinet and trumpet. Yeah, basically the way the band plays the music and the musical sensibilities of the people in the band bring to the music encompass various musics in which the members of the band are knowledgeable. So it's a combination of those different kinds of music.

Jesse: Okay, and I guess the question that would follow from that is how exactly the influences play out when you're working on a piece. Would you consider yourself the leader of the group or is it more collaborative?

Lorin: It's really a democratic band. I mean, we have pretty much a democratic process in the way we do everything. There's no rule as to how arrive at that would arrangements or material. Now we've started to do a lot of original material, so you know, people do bring things in, or sometimes people will just bring in a tune or the band will arrange it as a group. It really runs the gamut. I don't know if you know anything about our newest recording project—it's been a cycle of new songs that were composed by the Israeli singer Chava Alberstein.

Jesse: Yes, I wanted to ask you something about that. Go ahead please.

Lorin: Yes, these were poems by some of the greatest 20th century Yiddish poets she collected and set to music. She brought them to us and we arranged them together her and with Ben Mink, who is the producer.

Jesse: Okay, I'm looking at the liner notes right now for *The Well*, and I see that you are listed for transliteration and Yiddish typesetting. I wonder if you could explain that.

Lorin: Transliteration refers to the rendering in roman characters of the Yiddish text, and typesetting, you know what that means. So that I basically was responsible for putting the Yiddish text into copy that people can read. If they don't read the Hebrew characters, then they can read the transliteration and sing along with the record.

Jesse: So how did you come to know Yiddish? Was that something you got from family or school...?

Lorin: I studied it once I'd moved to New York. Early on when I started playing with the band, I realized that when it became obvious to us that this was going to be more serious than just something we were doing to make a little money for playing weddings and stuff, that I would

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