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# AGGIELIFE

Wednesday • April 2, 1997

## Profs get to roots of klezmer

By KAREN JANES  
THE BATTALION

Professors of linguistics, medieval English and statistics by day, hot klezmer musicians by night.

This describes the lives of the members of the Jewish music band Di Heyse Dray, which is Yiddish for "The Hot Three." Don Weeda, Mike Sherman and Jenny Goodman are A&M professors who play and perform in the band.

Weeda said he became interested in Eastern European music while learning to play the accordion 20 years ago.

"I actually hated accordion music, but I liked Eastern European bagpipe music," Weeda said. "I would try to make the accordion sound like bagpipes."

Sherman has played in other Jewish music bands, and Goodman has played a lot of international folk music.

"I found that there is a lot of interest (at A&M and in the community) in Jewish music, but no one was performing it," Goodman said. "The three of us thought we'd get together, try to play and see what happens."

Di Heyse Dray played its premiere at the Brown Bag Concert on March 19, where they drew a good-sized crowd.

"We filled the room and got good feedback," Goodman said. "There are klezmer fans both in the Jewish community and outside of it."

Sherman was pleased with the turnout at the concert but would like to see more students take interest in klezmer music.



Derek Demere, THE BATTALION

Di Heyse Dray, a local traditional Jewish music band, is made up of A&M professors Mike Sherman, Jenny Goodman and Don Weeda.

"Students need to explore and check out stuff like this," Sherman said.

Goodman also plays in a band called The King's Yiddish, with which Di Heyse Dray will be playing at the Texas A&M Holocaust Conference this evening.

"The King's Yiddish is more singing, folk and string music," Goodman said.

The band performs klezmer music, which is Eastern European Jewish music. Weeda said klezmer is unique.

"It is interesting music, a fusion of many different forms — jazz, folk and a lot of Gypsy music," Weeda said.

Klezmer originated in Eastern

Europe and was popular in the '20s and '30s in both Europe and America. Forty years later, klezmer regained popularity and has steadily gained momentum since then.

Sherman and Weeda said the klezmer revivalists of the '70s and the "pioneers" of klezmer music influence them. Goodman said the music has received influence from Russia, Hungary, Poland and Germany.

The band members do not write their own music. They use songs from the '30s and '40s and sometimes arrange the tunes. Goodman said they would like to compose some original songs but are still trying to understand this complicated and traditional music.

"We first need to understand what's already there," she said.

Religion plays a personal role in the band's music-making.

"I was born Jewish," Sherman said. "I believe in that religion, the strong cultural heritage, rael. Jews played this music in Eastern Europe."

Weeda, however, is not Jewish and plays the music because he loves it and is interested in Eastern European music.

"I enjoy all sorts of world music," he said.

The bottom line for Sherman, however, is that klezmer music is lively and fun.

"It's a hell of a lot of fun," he said. "That's why we do it. It's a blast."

## Kiss

Continued from Page 3

Guida played the role of Marta in the Argentine production of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and has also appeared in *Gypsy*, *Evita* and *El Diluvio que Viene*.

"I love my role," she said. "It's really one of the best musicals there is. My two partners, Brian Barefoot and Ross Stoner [Molina and Valentin, respectively] are

very good."

Guida, a musician whose rock band La Fila just recorded its first album, makes her American theatrical debut with *Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

Cranor said the musical's political content does not mean it is all dark and intense.

"It's evenly presented," Cranor said. "Audiences will feel like they've been entertained and gotten a pretty good story."

The soundtrack, written by John Kander and Fred Ebb, gives the musical its distinct character, Cranor said.

"It's not just big band, Broadway music," he said. "The music combines a lot of Latin themes."

Tonight's production will be preceded by a free lecture about contemporary musical theater. Michael Greenwald, associate professor of theater arts, will speak in Rudder at 6:30 p.m.

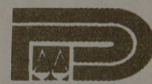
Cranor urges students to attend the penultimate production of the semester.

"People will enjoy it," he said. "I think it presents views that may be alien to us in a way that we can grow closer to understanding."

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