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For Immediate Release

**THREE WEST COAST PREMIERE PERFORMANCES OF
THE KLEZMER SHUL
TO BE PRESENTED BY VERETSKI PASS IN FEBRUARY**

SAN FRANCISCO, January 5, 2010—The **Veretski Pass** trio, preeminent exponents of East European Jewish music, will present three premiere performances in February of *The Klezmer Shul*, a 45-minute, four-movement instrumental suite, written to capture the emotional power of traditional synagogue singing without the use of words. *The Klezmer Shul* will be presented at Temple Israel in Alameda on Monday, February 8; Congregation Netivot Shalom in Berkeley on Wednesday, February 10; and on Sunday evening, February 14, at the **KlezCalifornia's Yiddish Culture Festival** at Congregation Etz Chayim in Palo Alto. All performances will be followed by discussions with the audiences. On Sunday, the discussion will be followed by a traditional klezmer dance party.

For *The Klezmer Shul*, the three members of Veretski Pass have departed from the traditional klezmer music for which they are best known. Drawing on their varied backgrounds, they have created a new composition inspired by the klezmer *shuls* (synagogues) of pre-war Eastern Europe, combining liturgical melodic principles and emotional intonations with jazz, *avant garde*, classical and folk elements.

“The name for this project,” explained Veretski Pass member Stu Brotman, “was inspired by noted scholar Dr. Walter Zev Feldman, in a lecture on the *shuls* associated with the Jewish trade guilds of Ashkenazic Eastern Europe. There were tailors’ *shuls*, shoemakers’ *shuls* — and klezmer *shuls*. We don’t know whether the klezmorim prayed or played more in the *shuls*, but they are known to have sometimes jammed in shul social halls.”

From the start, Mr. Brotman was particularly interested in whether music devoid of language can be a unifying force in a world divided by doctrine. The ensemble set out to create new Jewish music with emotional power comparable to that of traditional synagogue singing, with appeal to Jews of all denominations, secular Jews, and non-Jews. In a discussion after each performance, the artists will ask audiences whether they experienced the piece as “religious” and what that means to them.

Veretski Pass was formed six years ago by violinist **Cookie Segelstein**, with multi-instrumentalists **Joshua Horowitz and Stu Brotman**. Taking its name from Ms. Segelstein’s father’s birthplace, the mountain pass through which Magyar tribes crossed into the Carpathian basin to settle what later became the Austro - Hungarian Empire, Veretski Pass offers a unique and exciting combination of virtuosic musicianship and raw energy that has excited concertgoers across the world. With colorful instrumentation, unique arrangements and compositions, Veretski Pass plays ‘Old Country Music,’ with origins in the Ottoman Empire, once fabled as the borderlands of the East and the West. In a true

collage of Carpathian, Jewish, Romanian and Ottoman styles, typical suites contain dances from Moldavia and Bessarabia; Jewish melodies from Poland and Rumania, Hutzul wedding music from Carpathian-Ruthenia, and haunting Rebetic aires from Smyrna, seamlessly integrated with original compositions.

The trio has performed at the prestigious Concertgebouw Concert Hall in Amsterdam to a standing ovation from a sold-out audience, and their CDs “Veretski Pass” and “Trafik” have repeatedly been on lists of the “10 best klezmer recordings.”

Creation of *The Klezmer Shul* was made possible by a grant to Mr. Brotman from The Creative Work Fund (a program of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, supported by generous grants from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation) with assistance from KlezCalifornia.

Reservations for *The Klezmer Shul* on Monday February 8 at Temple Israel in Alameda may be made by e-mail at info@templeisraelalameda.org \$15, and \$18 at the door. For the performance at Congregation Netivot Shalom in Berkeley on Wednesday February 10, tickets at \$15 will be available at the door only.

Admission to the performance at the KlezCalifornia Yiddish Culture Festival is included in the Festival pass. Tickets (\$10 & \$20) will also be available at the door, or on line at www.klezcalifornia.org.

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For Calendar Editors:

**Veretski Pass presents the Bay Area premiere of
*THE KLEZMER SHUL***

A 45-minute, four movement instrumental suite, capturing the emotional power of traditional synagogue singing without the use of words.

Monday, Feb. 8 at 8 pm with post-performance discussion

Temple Israel

3183 McCartney Road, Alameda CA 94502 Phone: 510-522-9355

Reservations: \$15 donation at info@templeisraelalameda.org \$18 at the door

Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 8 pm with post-performance discussion

Congregation Netivot Shalom

1316 University Ave, Berkeley Phone: 510-549-9447

No advance booking -- Tickets at the door. Suggested donation \$15

Sunday, Feb. 14 at 8 pm followed by discussion at 8:45 and Klezmer Dance Party 9:45 – 11 pm

Yiddish Culture Festival

Congregation Etz Chayim,

4161 Alma Street, Palo Alto, CA 94306

For tickets (\$10 - \$20) and information: www.klezcalifornia.org

VERETSKI PASS BIOGRAPHIES

Cookie Segelstein, violin and viola, received her Masters degree in Viola from The Yale School of Music in 1984. She is principal violist in Orchestra New England and assistant principal in The New Haven Symphony Orchestra. She is the founder and director of Veretski Pass, a member of Budowitz and The Youngers of Zion with Henry Sapoznik. She teaches violin at Southern Connecticut State University, and has presented lecture demonstrations and workshops on klezmer fiddling all over the world. She is also on staff at Living Traditions' KlezKamp, Klezkanada and KlezCalifornia. She has performed with numerous notables including Kapelye, The Klezmatics, Frank London, and The Klezmer Conservatory Band, to name a few. She was featured on the ABC documentary, *A Sacred Noise*, heard on HBO's *Sex and the City*, appears in the Miramax film *Everybody's Fine* starring Robert De Niro, and heard on several recordings including the Veretski Pass self titled release and the new CD, *Trafik*. She is also the publisher of "The Music of..." series of klezmer transcriptions. Active as a Holocaust educator and curriculum advisor, she has been a frequent lecturer at the Women's Correctional Facility in Niantic, CT. She is also an Apple Certified Support Professional, and owns and operates The Macmama, LLC.

Stuart Brotman bass, basy (cello), tilinca (shepherd's flute) and baraban (Jewish bass drum), has been an accomplished performer, arranger and recording artist in the ethnic music field for over 35 years. He holds a B.A. in music from the University of California at Los Angeles, and has taught at KlezKamp, Buffalo on the Roof, the Balkan Music and Dance Workshops and KlezKanada. Mr. Brotman has also been recording, touring, and teaching New Jewish Music with world-class ensemble, Brave Old World since 1989. Long admired as a versatile soloist and sensitive accompanist in traditional and pop music circles, he has toured and recorded with Canned Heat, Kaleidoscope, Geoff and Maria Muldaur and played cimbalom with Ry Cooder at Carnegie Hall. He appeared in the Los Angeles production of *Ghetto*, the San Francisco production of *Shlemiel the First*, and performs frequently in ethnic music specialty roles for TV and film. A founding member of Los Angeles' Ellis Island Band, he has been a moving force in the Klezmer revival since its beginning. He produced The Klezmorim's Grammy nominated album, "Metropolis." He toured with the Yiddisher Caravan, a federally funded Yiddish folk-life show, and has performed with The Klezmorim, Kapelye, Andy Statman, the Klezmer Conservatory Band, Davka, The San Francisco Klezmer Experience, Khevrisa and Itzhak Perlman.

Joshua Horowitz, tsimbl, piano and 19th Century accordion, received his Masters degree in Composition and Music Theory from the Academy of Music in Graz, Austria, where he taught Music Theory and served as Research Fellow and Director of the Klezmer Music Research Project for eight years. He is the founder and director of the ensemble Budowitz and has performed with Rubin and Horowitz, Brave Old World, Adrienne Cooper and Ruth Yaakov. Joshua taught Advanced Jazz Theory at Stanford University with the late saxophonist Stan Getz and is a regular teacher at KlezKamp, The Albuquerque Academy and Klez Kanada. His musicological work is featured in four books, including *The Sephardic Songbook* with Aron Saltiel and *The Ultimate Klezmer*, and he has written numerous articles on the counterpoint of J.S. Bach. His recordings with Budowitz, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra. Rubin & Horowitz, Alicia Svigals, Adrienne Greenbaum and Fialke have achieved international recognition and he is the recipient of more than 40 awards, including the Prize of Honor for his orchestral composition, *Tenebrae*, presented by the Austrian government. Beside his work as a musician, he led the first post-WWII music therapy group at the pioneering Beratungszentrum in Graz, Austria.

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