

**Thanks to the Grant by the JUF, the works of famous Jewish composers inspire the birth of a new tune and music video, which will travel the North Shore Community with a Concert and a Presentation.**



**Terra Sounds School of Music & Arts of Glenview, IL presents Jukebox Groove, an original composition and music video, featuring cited works by famous Jewish composers from around the world.**

**Glenview, February 3, 2014.** It all began with the music of Gershwin, Bernstein, Benny Goodman, and other great Jewish composers of the past. Aleks Romanenko, President and co-founder of Terra Sounds School of Music & Arts has long wanted to find a creative way to present their iconic works to the new generation.

"I love introducing my students to a wide array of music, including the works that have really shaped me as a musician," says Romanenko, a recording artist also known as Aleks Di Roma and guitar instructor at the Glenview-based school and production company. "My inspiration behind Jukebox Groove is simple - when I first heard tunes like "Sing, Sing, Sing" and "Summertime," they sounded incredibly different from everything I had heard and they truly changed my understanding and appreciation of music. Coincidentally, at that time, I was about the same age as many of my students."

The opportunity came along in early 2013, when Romanenko was awarded the Tikkun Fellowship grant, a new Jewish United Fund (RJD) initiative, designed to support projects that engage the community in meaningful and significant ways. Jukebox Groove became a true Terra Sounds team effort, where guitarist Aleks Di Roma (Romanenko) is joined by clarinetist and Terra Sounds co-founder Matvey Kostukovsky, as well as other talented Terra Sounds instructors and prominent Chicago-based musicians, including saxophonist Doug Rosenberg, trumpeter James Davis, and percussionist Dane Crozier. Video work was completed by Columbia College of Chicago graduate, cinematographer Sargon Saadi.

"Our motivation was to showcase quotes from famous works such as "Bei Mir Bistu Shein" and "Somewhere" in a whole new way, so they would be more relevant for kids today", says Kostukovsky, co-producer of Jukebox Groove and Head of Audio Production at Terra Sounds. "As the result, the instrumentation, rhythm, and feel of these well-known melodies are completely different from the way they were done before. The track features an array of music genres, grooves, and

sounds that are more prevalent in today's pop music culture, yet with a strong improvisational nature of modern jazz. The quote from "Sing, sing, sing" for example, a traditional clarinet piece of the swing era, in our interpretation is a reggae tune featuring Doug Rosenberg on flute."

Another interesting cultural element uniting the cited works is the Eastern European background of all featured Jewish composers. "As I began to research the biographies of George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Benny Goodman, it turned out that their families all came from a similar cultural origin and relative region of the world ranging from St. Petersburg, Russia to Warsaw, Poland," says Romanenko, originally from Ukraine. "And to my surprise, Sholom Secunda, the composer of the famous Bei Mir Bistu Shein was originally from Oleksandriya, a small city about an hour away from my home town."

Building on that connection, one of the melodies quoted in the track bears a special tribute to the rich klezmer culture of Ukraine. "The tune, literally entitled "The Fried Chicklet" (in translation) is truly a part of my childhood, and is instantly recognizable by several generations of Ukrainian decent and far beyond," says Romanenko. "While the composer is unknown, the original lyrics are attributed to the famous Kiev-born lyricist Yakov Davydov, and by the early 1920s this song had become a standard in the repertoire of legendary Odessa-based klezmer musicians. Later, it was quoted by Dmitry Shostakovich, and ironically enough, became best known as a children's tune, despite the distinct political connotation of its lyrics."

In conjunction with the upcoming holidays and May, being the Jewish American Heritage Month, the Jukebox Groove Project will be presented at local synagogues, libraries, park districts, and cultural centers. To have Jukebox Groove be presented in your community, please contact Terra Sounds School of Music & Arts.

Also, Jukebox Groove track is available for free download via the Terra Sounds homepage. "If we can get one kid to fall in love with the music of Gershwin, Bernstein, or Benny Goodman, I will consider this project a huge success," says Romanenko. "I would also like to thank Genia Kovelman of RJD, Jewish United Fund, Genesis Philanthropy Group, and Adam Davis of the KFAR Jewish ArtsCenter for helping this project come alive. And a very special thanks to our entire creative community for all your support and inspiration."

### **About Terra Sounds School of Music and Arts:**

Terra Sounds is a new concept of dynamic education in music and creative arts for kids, teens, and adults. The school's faculty consists of some of the most prominent and talented musicians and artists in the Chicagoland area. From private lessons in music, arts, and languages to multi-disciplinary group classes, jam sessions and recording services, the Terra Sounds experience inspires students of all levels to realize their full potential.

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