



Young Fiddler's Forum
Quarterly Newsletter of the
Young Fiddler's Association of Minnesota
March, 2006

**Focus on Fiddling:
Klezmer—Jewish Music of Celebration
by Judith Eisner**

It's celebration time at YFA -- time to celebrate our first year -- on Sat. March 25 from 10 to 1 at Tapestry Folkdance Center. And that means time for klezmer music, because this fiddle style was used at weddings and celebrations of all kinds by the Jewish people living in Eastern Europe before the second world war.

The music is joyous, sad, and even funny, and it makes you want to get up and move your whole body.

At the workshop we'll learn about the modes (like scales), dance forms, harmonies, and ornaments that make klezmer music so special. You'll have a chance to play lead fiddle (melody), back-up, or to put your fiddle down and dance.

Judith, our instructor, loves this music with a passion and is very excited to be sharing it with such a talented and eager group as our very own YFA. Hope to see you all there. There may even be a surprise guest.

Profile of a Young Fiddler:
Interview with Catie Jo Pidel

Editor's note: we spoke with Catie Jo just after she got back from the Grass Seeds Music Academy at MBOTMA's Winter Bluegrass Weekend. Catie Jo was one of several YFA members who had taken part in Grass Seeds. The focus of the camp had been on jamming.

Talk about your experiences with jamming last weekend at the MBOTMA Winter Bluegrass Weekend.

It was really fun; I met some new people. I tried to jam with people I knew first, so I felt comfortable. Once or twice I jammed later with people I didn't know, but only if there was someone I knew in the jam too.

Talk about your experiences playing in bands and performing. What do you like best about performing?

I like being on stage and showing other people what I can do, and I like meeting people after the performance when they come up to talk with me. Then I know them the next time I see them. It's a way to get to know people.

Have you made friends through fiddling?

Yes—but not really very many my own age. Once I got into a band with some other kids called The Noodlers, because my fiddle teacher knew the other kids in that band. They are great players.

I've also met people at fiddle contests.

I like to meet folks at bluegrass festivals—one of the better ways I've found to meet people. I'll go up to them after they perform and say I like their style, and later I'll see them again at another festival. If you keep on going to festivals, faces start to look familiar. You can make friends that are nice to jam with or talk with, or just to be around.

What are your favorite fiddle styles?

I like anything bouncy and fun, with a sort of upbeat tempo. Occasionally I'll like really pretty waltzes. I'm more of a triplet and double-stop kind of girl. Irish is good for triplets and bouncy tunes. For good really hard fiddling with a lot of double stops and really fast playing, bluegrass is a better bet.

So even though your favorite jacket says "Bluegrass Girl," you do go beyond bluegrass?

Yes, any genre someone will teach me with a fun rhythm and beat, I like to learn.

Talk a bit about your school orchestra and its conductor, who was named Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Deb Sittcko can really get kids playing, even if they aren't the best of players. She can really get them going, having a good time with the music, and then they sound better.

How does she do it?

She gets them really excited about the music, and she doesn't use a lot of technical musical terms, like "mezzo forte"—she'll say, "let's make this really grungy." She tells them how to play it, and in a way they can understand.

You've told me you're not much of a music reader.

How does that work in school orchestra?

I started learning by ear, and music reading is something I've struggled with, because I always want to go off the page. It was taking me 1-1 ½ hours to figure out something by music, while it would take me 20 minutes by ear. Why walk

when you can drive? But Ms. Sittcko got me reading enough to be able to get a vague outline of what the music is.

Mark Anderson [of Monroe Crossing Band] once said to me, "If you can hum it, you can play it." If I can't hear what other people are playing around me, it's harder for me to play.

Our orchestra just got back from a Tier One competition, which is for middle-school-aged orchestras, grades 6-9. And I couldn't believe it—there was Mark Kreitzer of the Middle Spunk Creek Boys, setting up chairs. His brother helps organize the Tier One contest, and announces there. "Finally," I thought, "someone from my world."

Do you have any performance opportunities these days?

I just got into a little band with my mom and Fred Keller [of the Whistlepigs]. We're going to play some coffeehouses. Bill Cagley has a coffeehouse showcase [at Coffee Grounds] two Thursdays a month, and he wants me to play in one of those.

To finish our interview, I'll ask you the same question I asked Cody in the winter issue: What are your hopes for our YFA org?

My hope is for it to get better known, because it's a really great organization, and it helps kids out a lot. Yet I hope it stays small enough that you can still get individual instruction, and doesn't cost too much. But I want it to get better known so that we start to know the kids who come, and make friends there that we start to see showing up at the festivals to play and jam.

Upcoming Local Events of Interest

**JAMMING OPTIONS: MUSIC FESTIVALS
Spring into Summer jams at festivals!**

June 2 to 4, 2006, Richmond MN-

MBOTMA's Minnesota Homegrown Kickoff

El Rancho Mañana Campground & Riding Stable,
27302B Ranch Rd, Richmond, MN

A Friday-Sunday outdoor music and camping festival with twenty regional groups performing bluegrass, old-time stringband, and related forms of acoustic music. Showtimes are 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM Friday, 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM Saturday, and 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Sunday. \$10 daily to \$26 for the weekend plus camping (in advance). Information: 800-635-3037 or

www.MinnesotaBluegrass.org.

Other places to find festivals this summer:

Old-Time Herald, Feb.-Mar. Festival edition
Bluegrass Now magazine, festival edition

Bluegrass Unlimited magazine, festival edition
MBOTMA website for Minnesota festivals and events (see calendar link)

FIDDLE CONTESTS

(a great way to meet other fiddlers and jam!)

Cass County Ag Society, April 2, 2005
CCSA PO Box 71 Pillager MN 56473

Dam Festival Little Falls Minnesota June 25, 2005
Carol Christiansen (320) 632-2932

Smity's Amateur Fiddle Contest June 26, 2005
21540 Co. Rd 43 Big Lake, MN 55309
Norm or Dee Leslie (763) 263-2218

Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Championship & Festival Aug 6&7 P.O. Box 205 Cotton, MN 55724
(218) 482-5592 (218) 482-3351 (218) 482-3303

Wright County Fair Fiddlers Contest August
Howard Lake MN Contact Wright County Fair

Big Wood Old Time Fiddlers Contest-Pioneer Park, Annandale Minnesota August 14, 2005
Carol Weir (320) 274-8489

MSFA State Championship Minnesota State Fair Sept. 3&4, 2005 - Dee Scott (952)472-2987, Judy McKeand (952) 472-7587

Pioneer Days Albany Minnesota Sept. 18, 2005
Evelyn Carlson (320) 243-3641 or
Sue Merger (320) 845-4182

Music Around Town

HOT PICK ST. PADDY'S MONTH CONCERT:
Liz Carrol and John Doyle, Irish fiddle/guitar
Sunday, March 26 – 7 p.m.

3M Auditorium, MN History Center, St. Paul
tickets online at minnesotafolkfestival.org

Featured spring venues:

Bill Cagley's Bluegrass and Old-Time Showcase, Coffee Grounds - Hamline & Hoyt, near state fairgrounds www.thecoffeegrounds.net
2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, 7-9 p.m.
Each showcase features two guest acts, followed by Bill Cagley and friends. Free--Check it out!

Cedar Cultural Center
416 Cedar Av, Mpls, 612-338-2674
www.thecedar.org

Spring Cedar Cultural Center concerts:

March

12 Lunasa – fantastic Irish group
15 Open Stage with Bill Cagley—AND YOU?

- 19 Solas – Irish, with a woman fiddler
22 Flook-flutes (not fiddles) - Irish w/ bodhran
25 Eddie From Ohio

April

- 7 Jay Ungar and Molly Mason- Jay wrote the tune "Ashokan Farewell"
9 Battlefield Band – the best Scottish band!
12 Open Stage with Mary DuShane—AND YOU?
22 New Riverside Ramblers evening Cajun dance
28 Bruce Molsky –wonderful old-time fiddler (in concert)
29 Bruce Molsky old-time fiddle workshop (11am TBC)
30 Vasen- Nykelharpa, Violin/Viola, & guitar from Sweden

May

- 4 Darol Anger and The Republic of Strings with special guest Sara Watkins-trad to jazz
21 Warsaw Village Band – Polish band using violin, suka (unique polish fiddle coming from XVIth century), cello and various traditional polish drums.

To hunt up more musical events, visit Jim Whitney's Twin Cities Acoustic Music Calendar at <http://jimwhitney.com/tcamc> or MBOTMA's calendar link at www.MinnesotaBluegrass.org

To the Editor

Write us a letter! We want to hear your ideas—on fiddling, on jamming, and on what you like or want in workshops. For summer's issue, we are asking for your thoughts on JAMMING.

Write to us at youngfiddlers@yahoo.com

or Young Fiddlers, 2161 County Road B W, Roseville, MN 55113.

YFA News

UPCOMING YFA EVENTS:

Mar. 25 Klezmer Workshop

with Judith Eisner, 10 am-1 pm
(\$45 ea, or \$40 ea for members)

Apr. 29 YFA Jam, 10 am-Noon

(\$5 ea, free to members)

May 20 YFA Jam, 10 am-Noon

(\$5 ea, free to members)

Workshops and jams are held at Tapestry Folkdance Center, 3748 Minnehaha Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN. Gatherings include a break with refreshments. Come meet other young fiddlers in the area!

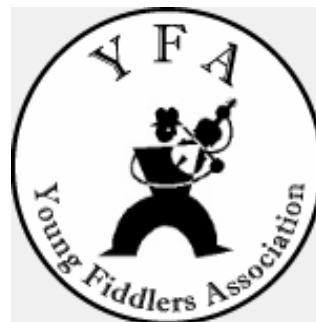
YFA Contact & Membership Info

YFA Individual Memberships are \$40/year, and family memberships are \$60/year. Membership includes a CD/Tune Book with featured workshop and jam tunes, and T-shirt(s).

The YFA 2005-6 CD/Tune Book can also be purchased separately for \$20, and YFA T-shirts are \$15 each.

To join YFA, register for workshops, or find out more about us, visit our website at www.youngfiddlers.com

**For more information, contact: youngfiddlers@yahoo.com
Young Fiddlers
2161 County Road B W
Roseville, MN 55113**



Who Are We?

Young Fiddlers Association of Minnesota

Providing Workshops & jam sessions for fiddlers ages 8-18

YFA provides a monthly gathering for young fiddlers from October-May each year, excluding December.

Three of these monthly gatherings are workshops taught by area teachers on specific fiddle styles. Jam sessions on alternate months allow young fiddlers to get acquainted, play together, and make those connections that may lead to playing partners or bands.

We seek to build a community of young fiddlers who can support each other and share their love of music.

YFA's website also has an information section listing area teachers who can provide mentoring/instruction on various fiddle styles.
