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## THE ELDRIDGE STREET PROJECT BRINGS TOGETHER MORE THAN 100 KLEZMER MUSICIANS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE FOR “A GREAT DAY ON ELDRIDGE STREET”

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*Unprecedented Gathering of Klezmer Legends and the World’s Most Influential Klezmerim  
For Photo Shoot Inspired by the Iconic “Great Day in Harlem” Photo*

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**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12**

**LOWER EAST SIDE KLEZMER MARCH AND CONCERT STARTING ON CANAL  
AND ELDRIDGE STREET S IN MANHATTAN**

**NEW YORK, NY (October 12, 2007)** – The Eldridge Street Project will assemble more than 100 of the world’s most influential klezmer musicians for “**A Great Day on Eldridge Street,**” an unprecedented, ten-day series of concerts, lectures and educational events that will kick-off on October 12 with a march through the streets of the Lower East Side and an historic photo shoot on the steps of the National Historic Landmark Eldridge Street Synagogue. The photo is inspired by “A Great Day in Harlem,” the iconic 1958 photograph of renowned jazz musicians, including Thelonius Monk, Dizzie Gillespie and Count Basie.

This unique gathering of international musicians is conceived and led by violinist **Yale Strom**, a leading ethnographer of klezmer culture and history. “I was influenced by the film *A Great Day in Harlem* and wanted to do something similar for klezmer culture,” says Strom. “The Lower East Side is the birthplace of Eastern European Jewish culture in America. And Eldridge Street is the oldest East European Orthodox synagogue, and an important site of traditional Jewish culture. I can’t think of a more appropriate place to take this photograph.”

The ten-day celebration will highlight klezmer, the wedding and folk music predominantly played by Eastern European Jews. Derived from Near Eastern and East European music sources, and influenced by the regions’ classical and folk traditions, klezmer is a decidedly multi-cultural musical form. Brought to the United States by Eastern European Jewish immigrants, its popularity waned by the 1950s as Jews looked to American musical sources. But klezmer experienced a revival beginning in the 1970s when young musicians interested in their East European Jewish roots reclaimed this musical tradition, incorporating American jazz and rock influences.

“Klezmer music is a remarkable, vital art form that spans countries, backgrounds and generations,” said Bonnie Dimun, executive director of the Eldridge Street Project. “Our hope is that this celebration will bring about a renewed appreciation for klezmer, both as a wonderful form of entertainment and an important aspect of Jewish culture.”

Musicians participating in **A Great Day on Eldridge Street** will travel to the Lower East Side from across the United States and around the world, including Canada, Israel, Europe and the former Soviet Union. They include pioneers of the klezmer renaissance, such as **David Krakauer**, **Frank London** and **Andy Statman**, guiding figures including folk singer and actor **Theodore Bikel** and

## ***A GREAT DAY ON ELDRIDGE STREET – OCTOBER 12-22***

MacArthur Award winner **John Zorn**, and more recent practitioners of the genre. Other featured participants are **Don Byron**, the world-famous African American jazz clarinetist who is an original member of the *Klezmer Conservatory Band*, as well as leading female klezmerim **Adrienne Cooper** and **Alicia Svigals**. International figures include **Moshe Berlin**, the famed Israeli clarinetist who will be performing for the first time in America, and members of the aptly named Amsterdam klezmer revival band *Di Goyim* -- none of whom is Jewish.

The participants range in age from twenty-something **Stephanie Tarras** and **Annette Ezekiel**, the 33-year-old leader of the *Golem*, to octogenarians **Mina Bern** and **Shifra Lehrer**, grand dames of Yiddish theatre. A number of the **Great Day on Eldridge Street** participants come from a long, esteemed line of *klezmerim*, including **Sy Tarras**, son of the late great klezmer clarinetist **David Tarras**.

The events of this multi-faceted cultural, performance and documentation project will include:

- **Friday, October 12 at 12 PM:** Kick-off event – a one-of-a-kind, festive procession of more than 80 leading klezmer musicians through the streets of the Lower East Side ending with a concert at historic Seward Park. Earlier in the day, photographer Leo Sorel will then take a portrait of the group in front of the Eldridge Street Synagogue. *Procession starts at the corner of Canal and Eldridge Streets (12 noon). Concert begins at 12:30 AT Seward Park, Eat Broadway and Rutgers Street. Information: 212.219.0888.*
- **Sunday, October 14 at 7 PM:** Major evening concert at Symphony Space in Manhattan.
- **October 15-21:** Statewide **Great Day Tour** with performances and educational workshops at the Bardavon 1869 Opera House in Poughkeepsie (October 16), The 1891 Fredonia Opera House (October 18), Buffalo State Performance Arts Center (October 20) and the 1890 Performance Hall at Hochstein in Rochester (October 22)

The **Great Day Tour** will feature a select group of thirteen renowned klezmer musicians: **Paul Brody, Robert Cohen, Rachel Lemisch, David Licht, Barry Mitterhoff, Leon Pollack, Elizabeth Schwartz, Norbert Stachel, Peter Stan, Alicia Svigals, Susan Watts, Jim Whitney** and **Yale Strom**.

As part of the tour, educational workshops will take place at public schools statewide to educate elementary and high school students about klezmer music and its role in Jewish culture.

*A Great Day on Eldridge Street* is funded, in part, by the New York State Music Fund, established by the New York State Attorney General at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors; and by the Gess Foundation and the Forward Association.

### **ABOUT THE ELDRIDGE STREET PROJECT**

The Eldridge Street Project, a non-profit, non-sectarian cultural organization, is preserving the 1887 Eldridge Street Synagogue as a center for historical reflection, aesthetic inspiration and spiritual renewal. Concerts, tours, literary events, art installations, workshops for school children, and other cultural and educational programs at the site serve audiences of all backgrounds. The renovation of the Synagogue, a National Historic Landmark, is scheduled to be completed in December 2007.

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