ABE SCHWARTZ
Master of Klezmer Music

Volume One - The First Recordings 1917
1. Russian Sher
2. Russian Bulgar
   early 1917 c, ct, fl, p, d
   as Oriental Orchestra
3. Lebedig (Gay and Jolly) [Lively]
4. Die Zihorene Chassene (The Silver Wedding) [Anniversary]
5. Tete Siser [Tate Ziser] (Sweet Father)
6. Nit By Motin [Nit hay Moten]
   ca. August 1917- c, ct, fl, p, d
   as Yiddisher Orchestra
7. Keshenerver Bulgar
8. Sadegurer Chussed'l
9. Chuken Tanz (Wedding Dance)
10. Tantz, Tantz Yiddelach (Dance On, Dance On)
11. Beim Rebens Side (At the Rebis Banquet)
12. Mitzvoh Tantz, Mit Der Kalez (Mitse-tants With the Bride)
13. Mazel Tov (Good Luck)
14. Die Yiddisches Neshomoh [The Jewish Soul]
   November 1917- c, ct, fl, p, d
   as Yiddisher Orchestra
   also some issues as: Orquestra Oriental; (Greek) Orchestra; Jewish-
   Russian Orchestra; Oriental Orchestra

Produced by Michael Schlesinger
Notes by Michael Schlesinger and Kurt Bjorling
Remastering by Stephen Erickson
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Conte, Frank London, Kurt Bjorling, Rebecca Miller, Shlomo Pextoe, Richard
Spotswood, Joel Rubin, Michael Alpert, Jerry Rosenfeld, Roger Kaufman, James
Garber and one or more persons whose names are omitted by oversight.

Abe Schwartz was born in Rumania in the 1880s, emigrated to America during the
early years of the 20th century and became one of the foremost orchestra leaders of
the Golden Age of recorded Yiddish music. His recording career began in the second decade of
this century, leading orchestras of 3 to 9 musicians under the generic names of Oriental
Orchstra, Yiddisher Orchestra and Jewish-Russian Orchestra and later as Abe
Schwartz's Orchestra.

His records were marketed in Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, Rumanian, Polish,
Lithuanian, and Greek series. No matter the ethnicity, Schwartz's music carried the
distinctive Yiddish sound - what is commonly called klezmer today.

In a career that spanned the 1910s-1940s, Schwartz recorded in a wide range of styles
and ensembles: large orchestras in which he played violin or piano, musical interludes for
the skits of Yiddish comedians, violin solos to the piano accompaniment of his daughter
Sylvia, and as arranger and accompanist for vocalists.

As a composer of Yiddish songs, his widest known work is Di Grine Kuzine, the best
selling Yiddish song of its time. His performances include some of the oldest doina and
hora repertoire. Commercial consideration and a sense of popular taste caused him to add
popular and jazz elements to klezmer music.

The sound of the Schwartz band differed from recording session to recording session:
the number of musicians, the lead instruments and instrumentists changed. Sometimes
the orchestra was showcase for a single musician: Shimele Beckerman, Dave Tarras or
Philip Greenberg, other times the focus was on ensemble playing.

Schwartz's recordings were an amalgam of how he and the record company perceived
the market. At a session ca. August 1917 Schwartz recorded 4 selections that had been
waxed on December 2, 1915 by Abraham Ellenberg's Yiddisher Orchestra for a
competing company. (See 3-6) Schwartz used the same titles as the earlier recordings al-
though in most cases specific titles did not exist in the old klezmer repertoire.

Unlike the efforts of other bands to duplicate the recording successes of competing
bands or recording labels, Schwartz always significantly changed the interpretation, not
necessarily for the better but always in his original and distinctive way. For instance,
Schwartz's tempos are usually a little faster than earlier recordings, the trombone playing
more powerful and rhythmic, the clarinet embellishments and counterpoint rhythmically
centered. The Schwartz Orchestra's interpretations are more American, less European in
their treatment of tempo and instrumental texture, but in style and melodic phrasing still
sound more European than most of the other klezmer ensembles recorded in
America.

In this first volume of our reissues of Abe Schwartz's recordings we are presenting all
the known issues from his first 3 sessions which occurred in 1917.

Original titles have been provided as well as more accurate transliterations and
translations were appropriate.
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5. Tate Siser [Tate Ziser] (Sweet Father) (3:32)
7. Keshenerev Bulgar (3:17)
8. Sadegurke Chusedil (3:05)
9. Chuchen Tanz (Wedding Dance) (3:30)
10. Tantz, Tantz Yiddelach (Dance On, Dance On) (3:12)
11. Beim Rebens Sideh (At the Rebeis Banquet) (3:28)
12. Mitzvoh Tantz, Mit Der Kaleh [Mitsce-tants With the Bride] (3:15)
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