Bobby Block will never forget his roots!

He lived with his family behind his father’s grocery store. His mother kept the radio tuned to WDAS all day which at that time featured Yiddish music. “We were observant and my sister, Gert, and I along with our parents were members of congregation Shaare Shamayim at 23rd & Wharton Streets in Philadelphia, PA. My musical instrument was clarinet - the basis for Yiddish songs - so that’s where I got my background”. It was an informal education that has served Bobby well.

The South Philly native, who now lives in Mount Laurel, NJ, has made a name for himself as a virtuoso Klezmer clarinetist. Of course, the major part of the band’s bookings today come from social and corporate events, but Bobby has come full circle by putting together a separate select group of musicians he calls the “The Klezmer Kings”. Drawing on his rich ethnic musical background he has created a program performing a variety of Yiddish and Klezmer selections interspersed with a running nostalgic and comical narrative.

Like an elegant tapestry, Bobby Block has woven his love of music into a fabric of one of life’s pleasures—music! Music to soothe the soul, music for remembering, music for dancing and music to lighten the heart!
1. Pacey’s Frailach 1:36
A melody taken from "Because Of Our Sins" chanted on almost all major Jewish holidays. Many times melodies chanted in the synagogue found themselves played by klezmorim (musicians). Pacey’s was one of those melodies played in a bright dance tempo and like many other frailachs and bulgars, had no title. One night at the Pine Plaza, a restaurant in Philadelphia, PA, where Bobby Block played in the band for three years starting at age 19, a patron named Pacey requested this melody and then continued to do so week after week. One evening after giving the three-piece band a $10.00 tip, the song became known as Pacey’s Frailach and continues to be called by this title throughout the Klezmer world.

2. Tzu Lang
(Too Long I’ve Waited For You) 3:18
About 1950, Bobby attended a “Gathering” at a friend’s home in the Feltonville section of Philadelphia. Her home had a piano and in the storage section of the piano bench he found a piece of sheet music (which he still has). The song was “Tzu Lang.” He brought the music to the Pine Plaza where he was performing at the time. The musicians played it, and the people loved it and it became a favorite part of the band’s repertoire. In 1998, when going through some old sheet music he once again came across “Tzu Lang” - a beautiful love song, played here in a rumba tempo.

3. Philly Bulgar (Traditional) 2:38
Another “no name” frailach - Bobby calls it the “Philly Bulgar” because it is probably the one most often played at weddings and bar mitzvahs by Philadelphia Klezmorim.

4. Medley Of Yiddish Love Songs 5:52
(Three of Bobby’s favorites done in a rumba tempo)
“Mayn Tiare (My Dearest)” made popular by the beautiful tenor voice of Seymour Rechtzeit. “Git Mir Op Mayn Harts Tzaricht (Give Me Back My Heart)” a tender heart rendering melody. “In Meina Oyg’n Bis Du Sheyn (In My Eyes You Are Beautiful)” one of the most popular Yiddish love songs from the 1940s.

5. Tarris Bulgar (Traditional) 1:49
Another “no name” bulgar made popular by Dave Tarris and hence called the “Tarris Bulgar” by Bobby. Dave Tarris (1897-1987) was known as the “Benny Goodman of Klezmer clarinetists”. His style influenced many musicians as is evident in Bobby Block’s clarinet interpretations.

6. Yiddish Medley 3:20
(These are two of those yiddish tunes that creep into your bones and warm your heart.)
“Der Yiddisha Nigun-Abik Zell Dus Zine.” This translates to “the Jewish melody, may it be forever.” “Script Klezmer Script.” This translates to “play musician play.”

7. Mazinka 4:04
This is from a melody called the “Mazinka Oiz Gegeben.” This translates to “The last single child has been given away.” It is played at the crowning (krensel) ceremony of a wedding. The tradition is to place a crown of flowers on the head of the mother when her last single child is married. Bobby has his own beautifully unique style of conducting this ceremony. After crowning the mother, everyone dances around the wedding family who are seated in the center of the dance floor. On this recording, the dance is a medley of songs that include “Ot a Zoi,” “Oy A Sheyna Kalla” and “The Potch Tanz.”

8. Farges Mikh Nit (Do Not Forget Me) 3:18
This beautifully tender melody comes to Bobby from an album recorded by the Barry Sisters. One of his very personal favorites, he includes this piece in the collection - without rhythm in a soulful lagato feel. It is totally evident by the haunting sound of his saxophone that this selection is very special to the performer.

9. Russian Medley 2:43
This is a potpourri of Russian melodies; beginning slowly and finishing in a frenetically paced tempo. You will start out snapping your fingers, but end up clapping your hands!

10. Od Yishomah 1:57
We bring this collection of songs to a close with an Israeli Hora that will make you want to jump up and dance. As Bobby so often says at the end of his performances, “HAPPY MUSIC !!!”